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Swan As A Symbol Of Beauty And Purity In Kazakh Poetry

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Abstract

The paper discusses the use of swan image in Kazakh poetry. Swan is one of the traditional images in Kazakh poetry. The tradition of celebrating swan as a symbol of beauty, laid by Asan Kaigy in the 15th century has also found its extension in modern Kazakh poetry. In the poems of S. Seifullin, I. Zhansugurov, K. Amanzholov, M. Makatayev, K. Akhmetova, K. Salykova the swan is praised as a symbol of purity, beauty and holiness. Comparison of different writers and their examples of the images of a swan in the literature are provided. The poems of Asan Kaigy, K. Amanzholov, S. Seifullin are analyzed from the point of view of the image of swan description.

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1. Introduction

Having found its continuation in Kazakh poetry the tradition of swan celebration as a symbol of beauty takes its origin in the creative work of Asan Kaigy. Every national literature has its own peculiarities of understanding and nature perception. Thus, in Russian poetry among other acts of nature, the most often praised and specially given prominence is a tree. Birch, snowball tree and fir tree are not just trees in Russian poetry, but national poetic images.

Nomadic way of life of Kazakh people is very close to nature. Kazakh people have been wandering along the shores and rivers. The closest image is the image of the bird swan. In nomad's perception swan is a sacred bird. Swan is considered a beautiful bird, that is why girl's beauty is compared as a rule with the beauty of swan and beloved person is called "my swan" ("my lebyodushka"). In fiction we can find such comparisons and steady word-combinations, as "kustai kirshik ak" (perfectly pure as swan), *akku kustai zharkyldau* (sparkle like swan), *akkudai*

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(like swan), *akkudai sylanu* (perk like swan), *akku kustyn moinyndai* (swan neck), *aidynyn erke sulu akkuyndai* (water favourite is swan beauty), *akkudyn mamgyndai* (like swan feather), *akkudai tizily* (line up like a swan), etc.

Like the favourite of water – swan beauty
Golden moon floats silently in the sky. (K. Amanzholov).
Pedigree racer is flawlessly pure like a swan,
It is like being presented by a devoted friend. (S. Seifullin).
Her white hands

Like a swan neck. (I. Zhansugirov).

Swan is one of the traditional poetic images in Kazakh poetry. Saken has poetized swan many times. He mentions swan in the poem “Sholde” (“In the desert”) for the first time. In this poem, written during the times of the author’s persecution, we can see writer’s grief about his native land, Mother, his beautiful wife. If the first part of the poem is called “Dombra” (national Kazakh musical instrument), the second part was called by the poet “Akkuga” that means “Devoted to Swan”. In this part the author communicates the feeling of grief that filled his heart. The image of swan expressed author’s hope for nearest release from ties, and hope for the nearest joy. Through the image of swan that will help him to release and settle in his soul the hope for kindness triumph, he sends his love to his Motherland. There is a tradition in poet’s poems to send love to the Motherland with the help of the birds. But why the author has chosen swan, there are many other birds in the desert. Using the image of swan the author tells not only grief about his Motherland but also his delicate feelings to his beloved and dearest whom he left in the beautiful area of Saryarka.

Saken praises the swan as a special image of love, friendship and beauty. We find out about his aspirations in life, in the poems to beauty and purity and everything beautiful through his poetic lines “*Tugannan sagan gashypyn*” (“I have been in love with you since I was born”) in his poem “*Akku kus*” (“Swan bird”).

The swan flies
Like strong wind
Everything is singing merrily around
And the lake has enveloped the swan
Enveloped slowly the chest.

Spreading like a mirror its white chest (S.Seifullin, 2003).

The author compares swan’s flight and tenderness of a beautiful girl’s movements. In this description swan symbolizes not just girl’s movements tenderness but he is the symbol of their freedom. In this poem the author compares the swan’s flight with “the power of wind”. If to evaluate this poem from the epoch point of view, when Saken lived, swan has been the symbol of beauty, magnificence, tenderness. It is presented to us from another point of view. Such feelings as beauty, magnificence of nature are an eternal category for the human. S.Seifullin’s poem “*Akkudyn airyluy*” (“Swans’ parting”) has embodied in itself all these notions. This poem is a legend about great love with the only goal that has embodied confident aspiration into the future. There is a thought in it that passionate love, made oath, sincere friendship is better than unhappy life full of violence. Poet’s personality as an artist is unified with the nation. It is the very poem that we can absorb folklore images and legends from. Because of this poem is sincere, pure and correct image of native folklore.

The image of a swan in S. Seifullin’s poem is represented as a symbol of love. Possessing this quality, swan’s image is preserved in our consciousness as a special symbol of beauty. The sacred bird is not just a symbol transferring sincere feelings of the lovers but also an artistic means of displaying honesty, sincerity which are the driving force of keeping balance and sincerity of human feelings in the world. Saken treated swan image in his poetry love’s messenger. The main peculiarity of the poet’s creative work is that while creating swan’s image, the poet endows him with feelings which are peculiar of a human. Speaking about love of winged beauty the poet touches upon the theme of human feelings and relationship.

One of the poets understanding the whole power of human soul and paying attention to such valuable qualities of a person that not everybody could see was Mukagali. He has left us an inheritance as a beautiful monument to the swan in poetry, supplementing and showing all the beauty of the nature, his poem “*Akkular uiyktaganda*” (“When swans sleep”). This poem is to become the heritage that will be handed down from generation to generation. Makatayev’s poem “*Akkular uiyktaganda*” is a monument to beauty. The image of swan is presented manysidedly here.

Located on the top of the mountain, “like drops of rain on a stone”, transparent, small lake is weary of loneliness. This lake is called Zhetimkol that means, “Orphan Lake”. Today it seems that “there have not been what

have been really before” – white wings swans, swimming on the surface of the lake. Beautiful lake sorrows like blue eyes of a blue mountain skyrocketing where green fir trees grow. Transparent lake sorrows about the swans that transform nature, without which even sparkling sun rays lose its beauty. Charming nature, the beauty of which can be observed but it is not possible to describe its beauty with words. He cannot be happy on the one reason only – there is no chime of the swans’ wings flying up in the early morning. Swan song is a poem song. Thus, the author has a thought that bird songs is like a symbol of love, a true feeling that takes special place in the heart of a person and in nature without this song grief and depression hang over the Earth. There is a national wisdom, that says: “*Akkusyz kol zhetim*” (“Lake is an orphan if there are no swans in it”). And lake Zhetimkol having absorbed all this wisdom is an orphan. The Man who feels that involuntary lapses into grief.

Real poet artist possesses a special gift to convey the variety of the beauty of the nature with the help of only a few words. Mukagali could skillfully convey the beauty of the swan’s movements, efficiently using vivid expressions in his work. Let us try to answer the following question: why do we consider a swan to be the symbol of beauty of the nature in the poetic world of Mukagali. We have mentioned that lake is beautiful when there are some swans. How the poet praised the swan beauty in his works. The poet does not change the places that can show us all the beauty of the swans. Both Mukagali and Saken made the lake the place of swans inhabitation. Also the poet has chosen the time to show the swan’s beauty on the lake as early morning. In the next lines the author says that one of the wonders, bringing joy together with sunrise is swan:

Sun rays are thrown about on the high ranges,
They have broken up along the lake.
The bird is white, the mirror like surface is white, the lake is whiter than white,
White ray has fallen into pieces.
The lake with the sky and the sky merge with the lake,
And beautiful swans deliberately wake up (Makatayev, 1989).

Only the poet with an open soul can become the witness of harmony in nature and praise it in his poems. Only when the bird, lake and sunrise rays cover the Earth – all this becomes one unity. You must have noticed that sunrise rays do not spread but radiate light. Like an innocent pure angel similar to baby’s laughter scattered about like beads is revealed to the world. The spirits rise because there is a harmony on the Earth in such early morning. We admire the swan the image of which we know as sacred power, bringing light together with sunrise.

How could poet Makatayev manage to sublimate the swan image to the necessary level. There are no strange sounds for him in the nature, he hears all various sounds. For the poet who is capable of enlivening the scenery, lyrically show the beauty of the swan from the psychological point of view, this bird is not just a symbol of pure, tender love, it is also a close image to heart, which he worships.

When your wings clapped jingly,
My soul trembled.
In your interrupted way
I sacrificed my interrupted soul.
Disorderly drawn out on the smooth surface of the lake
There are beauties who cannot leave you, the desert.
Why I was not born a swan,
I cannot be a Man (Ahmetova, 1974).

The poet is disappointed when he sees how swans die because of people, there is an inexpiable sorrow when he sees a flock of swans that leave their lakes and go to warm countries. The poet’s soul always strives for the best. Mukagali who has the talent to speak even with falling leaves acknowledges the power of beauty in the swan’s image, possessing the gift to give people joy, hope and forget little difficulties of fleet life. Reading those lines we begin to understand the poet’s wish with tender soul in its nature during the moments of joy or in the state of disappointment and sorrow, fly as freely as swan and swinging its wings and setting up justice on the Earth. From these lines we can see that the swan is the source of poet’s power during the minutes of his disappointment. Life is valuable by the moments of joy and grief that rush the person like waves. Describing not only the image but also sorrowful voice of the swan, its beautiful figure the poet dreams about an unspoiled world.

Apricots evolve the fragrance,
Sweet smelling flowers evolve the fragrance
And I rush to you like a swan (Ahmetova, 1974).

Kulyash Ahmetova in its poetry describes the swan not just as a messenger of feelings, she wants to show it as

the image of her careless youth.

Emit the triumph like a flower,
 Appearing in a merciful season that has grown in the shadow
 How many holidays there are!
 The steppe is in blossom, when
 Girls in red and green dresses come there.
 Emit the beauty like a swan

On the smooth surface of the lake,

Beauty makes the girls grown up too early (Ahmetova, 1974).

With years, looking back at her own youth, looking at it with a judging look she sees the image of a swan with a grief. Being joyful every day, she compares the youth with the lake, pure like transparent blue sky, like a high mountain, like a master of the dream and the center of all the best. Expressive means in the poetry in the lines of the poem come from not just a simple aspiration to be expressed beautifully but because of aesthetic perception of the feeling of the image, expressive thinking in the world perception as a poet artist. The poetic beginning giving the poem and every image, every word in a poetic piece of literature there is a deep feeling of consciousness and expressive thinking of a poet. To understand the peculiarities of the language of the poetry you should be capable of feeling the poet's thoughts well and also peculiarities of his artistic thinking and peculiarities of world perception from aesthetic point of view. For some reason the word "poetry besides "poem" and "rhyme" has the meaning of "beauty". The poetry is born of deep tender feeling. It means experience and heart beating.

That is why Kulyash Ahmetova describes the image of the swan in her poetry, linking it with a definite moment in the person's life. The image of the swan is shown in her poetry as the messenger of pure love in her youth. One of the poets who contributed a lot in depicting the peculiarities of the image of the wonder of the nature after Mukagali is Kakimbek Salykov. Though not so many works are devoted to this topic, all of them are very significant and weighty, their scope is wide like Kazakhstan vast steppe and their aspiration is as high as the tops of Kazakhstan mountains. There are many poems in Salykov's lyrics devoted to the feeling of mutual understanding. There is a reason here why the word "love" is substituted for "mutual understanding". There are no such habitual words, as "I love", "I burn out of love", that we can find in the creative works of other poets. The author who treats the theme of love differently cannot go past the image of swan for more expressive rendering of his feeling to his beloved. And it is clear. Though the author does not provide his reader with some knowledge on high aesthetic level in conveying the image of the sacred bird which is associated in the nation's consciousness as a symbol of the beauty, still he has a lot to say. The relationship between Nature and Humanity compose the whole entity. The Man's outlook towards environment itself is formed in the connection with his environment. From this point of view the author has developed a very wise and strong thought. The poet deeply feeling the beauty with all his soul is very upset because the swan becomes a victim in nature. He starts speaking about the swan to express his feelings:

The Swan, a white Tsarina,
 I will open my secret to you.
 I will sing your image in a song,
 Like the image of a white-faced girl who is in love.
 You are a balmy of the heart,
 Direct your wings to me.

Come close to me and comfort your friend

Hugging with your white broad wings (Salykov, 2005).

The author conveys his feelings to his beloved through the image of swan. Humanity aspiration from its very beginning to beauty and the wish to envelop this beauty – all this resembles outside beauty of the swan and the beauty of his movements. Salykov is characteristic of the fact that he searches for the beautiful image of the swan in young girls surrounding him.

The poet does not limit himself just by the search of tender girls. He devoted to them his tender poems and allows them to understand that he would like to be near the same girls as a swan next to snow-white girls. The poet's heart is overflowed with joy when he sees how a swan opens his wings like a flower. The poet cannot withdraw his eyes from this beautiful picture:

The swan did not leave me
 And listened to her mysteries.
 I suffered that my eyes were not enough,

To find out this beauty (Salykov, 2005).

We can not help noticing that in Salykov's poems the swan is described through the image of a beautiful girl. This is no way connected with cosmogonic notions. It looks like that the poet has the aim to praise every day routine life in his poems, and appeals to his reader to search for his ideal not in the far alien places but near, next to himself. That is why the following his lines can be considered regular:

The same sunrise will come,
That will make me forget my torments.
I would like just to see shortly
The beauty of snow-white beauty.
There is a tender song,
There is an excited voice
And this very she swan cannot leave my memory
The one that I have not met yet (Salykov, 1995).

Swan is a strong image in Makatayev's creative work. The poet has the aim to accentuate his attention not on the glaring natural beauty of the bird but on its sacred power. None of the poets could hit it over the fence of the readers in the artistic style, like Mukagali did it that in the basis of the sacred bird there are such qualities that influence taboos preservation in the national understanding. The poet managed to fill the image of the swan with the thought that together with world's balance loss, national essence also losses its value. The poet tries to protect the humanity from ignorance with special discernment because he has acquired the magic power of this quality overestimation.

Makatayev's swan is a huge image that has absorbed all life philosophy. This image embodies not just a symbol of love of a separate person. It collects mercy in its pure form and all other best qualities of the humanity. Saken renders the swan image with an artistic skill as a symbol of flawless beauty, eternal and pure love, the image transferring the tenderest feelings of the lovers, the image that is the basic driving force in the sincerity of human relationship.

Though poetess Kulyash Ahmetova praised the sacred bird with great joy and with all her soul, she could not turn the swan in the basis of her poems, but she manages to render such ancient notion as "sacred" as a woman, mother and poetess. The peculiarity of this poetess creative work is that she shows herself in the image of tender and helpless swan. At the same time the poetess does not go deep into life philosophic recollections while swan describing, still she manages to show tender features and qualities of a woman. Our great famous poets managed to embed into the image of swan original and special recollections about the world surrounding us. The poetess managed to show the peculiarities of the perception of tender, sensitive nature by the person with the same tender and sensitive soul. Whatever thoughts she has expressed in connection with the bird swan, she goes deep into her soul more than praises other people's feelings.

Kakimbek Salykov's poetry also has a prevailing tradition to praise his own experiences. The poet does not describe passionate, fervent feelings but at the same time he tries to embed into the image of swan the notion of beauty and love. However, swan image celebration in the poet's creative work does not make us happy with its peculiarity or novelty. It is necessary to point out only the realistic thought of the poet about the fact that we should search for the symbol of pure love not in the heaven but on the Earth.

Conclusion:

In our poetry different poets, variously using their creative potential with peculiar features have described the swan's image. Due to that this image was many sidedly exposed. The image of a sacred bird embodied all the best earth qualities, such as love, beauty, purity, perfection, faithfulness, peace, harmony and many others and turned into a high artistic image.

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